Socio-Economic Analysis of Poorest of the Poor Section of Society - Beggars: A Case Study of Uttar Pradesh, India

Mushir Ali

Abstract

Begging is a visible phenomenon which can be noticed all over, at nooks and corners of the world, particularly in the developing countries, where beggars could be seen at markets, shopping centers, restaurants, bakeries, filling stations, parking lots, streets, traffic signals junctions, religious places, near universities, colleges, schools, and tourist sites. They are spread from small villages to large urban centers. They are considered victims of unfair distribution of wealth, maladjustments of individuals with their social-economic milieu, having poor socio-economic conditions characterized with unemployment, pitiable earning, rising living cost, high growth of population, continued rural-urban migration and perhaps inherited tradition. The present study is an effort to understand the socio-economic conditions of the poorest of the poor in a society with the objectives to identify causes at grassroots level with special reference to demographic structure of the beggar population, living arrangements and living conditions, and socio-economic situations which lead to begging in urban centers. The study is based on primary data collected through field survey in the city of Shahjahanpur and its urban fringe, Uttar Pradesh, India. On the basis of random sampling, 120 households were sampled from four urban wards and six villages of peri-urban areas for detailed information on age, sex, education, and socio-economic conditions. The results explain about domination of child beggars, illiteracy, instability of income, higher proportion of unmarried persons and higher proportion of beggars from lower castes, domination of poorly paid workers, and slum dwellers not having drinking water and toilet facilities.

Keywords: Poverty, Old Profession, Survival, Flood, Caste and Religion.